

Easter Vigil
23/04/2011

Mark the Evangelist

Matthew 28:1 - 10

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen! The three words of the Easter message are older than the Gospel narratives, and they are the source of the news we celebrate tonight. And yet nowhere in the New Testament do we find a description of the Resurrection itself.

It is impossible to get behind the biblical material to provable facts. And if we could, the Gospel writers knew that it is possible to experience the fact, but not to come to embrace the faith of the disciples. The guards at the tomb who saw the event were paralysed with fear and became paid promoters of a story about body snatching.

It is ironic, and meaningful, that what the New Testament writers speak about is always out of reach. The Resurrection narratives are not history, or science, or biography. They are preaching: words of faith that declare a conviction, a truth about life. They invite us to enter into that truth, which is based on a relationship of trust in Jesus.

They want us to understand Jesus' resurrection to new life was testimony that God has fully embraced him who had been rejected and crucified by us. That God has done this for Jesus means we are accepted at the deepest level of our being, and are given a second chance at life. This is what is meant by the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. Reconciliation has taken place between God and us, at God's initiative.

This is a gift of God to us, and it come from a place where we least expect to find it. But once understood, this news has transformative power, enabling us to live a new life.

Thanks be to God.
